BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08653 631 3

No. 5824.101

GIVEN BY

Miss Mary Adams Brooks

7584.101

A

DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

SOUTH DANVERS,

ON THANKSGIVING DAY,

NOVEMBER 27, 1856.

BY JAMES O. MURRAY.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

BOSTON:
HENRY W. DUTTON AND SON, PRINTERS,
Nos. 33 and 35, Congress Street,
1856.

A

DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

SOUTH DANVERS,

ON THANKSGIVING DAY,

NOVEMBER 27, 1856.

BY JAMES O. MURRAY.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

BOSTON:
HENRY W. DUTTON AND SON, PRINTERS,
Nos. 38 and 55, Congress Street,
1856.

Miss Mary Adams Brock
July 11, 1901.

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY

DISCOURSE.

First the blade, then the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear.—Mark iv. 28.

The processes of nature often bear a striking resemblance or analogy to the processes of moral development. It were altogether wrong, logically, as well as morally, to force out of this fact the conclusion of the materialist—that they are of kith and kin, occupying equal grades in the scale of the universe, and sharing one and the same destiny at last. The spheres in which they operate, the laws regulating their operation, are separated by no less an interval than separates the world of matter from the world of mind; by no smaller a difference than exists between the force of gravity, and the force of motive. The only conclusion, fairly drawn from this observed analogy, is, that the Great Framer of a vast system composed of diverse parts, works after *one* type, and chose to make the processes going on in the human soul, not wholly unlike those going on in the secret and silent realms of nature.

It is the part of a wise preacher, however, to seek out these analogies, for they serve no mean purposes in the proclamation of the truth. It is their honorable province to make truth *real* and *vivid* in the view of the soul, standing out like gnarled oaks in the clear moonlight, each slender twig, each delicate leaflet distinctly seen; or, like mountains against an evening sky, each peak with its curves and swells traced in well-defined outline. So Christ, the model of all teachers and preachers, was wont to point *his* teachings. Whether discoursing on themes lowly or lofty, simple or intricate, we find him directing his hearers to the world beneath, around, and above them. The little sparrow, flitting in the air, or swaying to and fro on the fragile reed, was summoned to teach trust in an over-ruling Providence. The plant of the field, or of the garden, shooting up fresh and green, climbing slowly along to maturity, is culled to reveal the law of growth in that spiritual kingdom he had come to establish. *First the blade, then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear.*

This illustration is germinant with truths pertaining to the kingdom of God. It sets forth the pregnant fact that perfection is reached there, not by sudden starts followed by as sudden stops; not by rapid onsets terminating in enfeebled energies; not by revolutionary shocks, the sure antecedents of backward movement; but by slow and, at times, almost imperceptible gradations; by influences coming, as the sunshine, at inter-

vals; as the dew, gently; as the rain, seasonably. It proclaims, moreover, that this kingdom is to be hurt and hindered by adverse circumstances, as harsh blasts bruise and break the slender stalk.

It is a maxim of the logician, that whatever is true of a class must be true of the individuals included within that class. Whatever value may be attached to the maxim as a principle of logic, the proposition cannot be disturbed, that what is true of the kingdom of Christ—a grand empire composed of many and minor moral sovereignties—must be true of each of these sovereignties. Each of these must be obedient to the same laws by which the vast empire is itself controlled. Each of these must have the same means of increase. Each of these must attain perfection by the same steps.

As one component of that spiritual realm—a component which, if subordinate, is also essential—the cause of human freedom is asserting its claims with clearer and louder emphasis, with more subduing appeals, with sterner and stouter logic. It is comprehended within the wide yet warm embrace of that kingdom, so surely as the prime law of heavenly principality is *love*. To affirm the possibility of universal prevalence for the kingdom of God, while any race, or any portion of any race, yet groan under shackles, forged in the stithy of human avarice, is to affirm the baldest of all incongruities, the most irreconcilable of all contradictions.

But as obedient to the laws of the vast moral empire,

within which it is embraced, we must anticipate for the cause of human freedom a slow growth; yet we must also contemplate an ultimate triumph. To unfold some of the causes of that tardy increase, to set forth the grounds on which rests securely that final triumph, constitute the aim of this discourse.

On the very threshold of this discussion, we are met by a doctrine broached alike under the auspices of freedom, and under the blights of slavery, which, if true, overthrows both propositions announced for proof. We have been gravely told, that, by divine constitution, some races of men are inferior physically and mentally, *in order* to occupy the position of vassals or serfs or slaves; that religion, natural and revealed, not only permits but sanctions and ratifies this relation. In an age of reforms and missions, of benevolent societies to meet every want of our race, of genial and springing and spreading christian charities, it is gravely asserted that the revival of the slave trade is a measure not only of political expediency, but would prove the almoner of untold blessings to the victims of the middle passage.

We assert this doctrine, whatever be its shape or guise, and wherever broached, to be false, because it is in deadly conflict with true views of the human soul. *This is one and the same for all men.* It has the same boundless capacities for noble intelligence and for elevated bliss, the same sublime yet momentous responsibilities for this world and for the world to come, alike where icebergs crash their way along the frozen shores,

and where the palm tree shoots up to heaven its graceful pillar crowned with a capital of more than Corinthian beauty. The tented Arab and the learned Saxon have the same loves, hopes, joys, fears, griefs. God hath affixed to the human soul a body as it hath pleased Him. *Here*, it animates the form of some fair Circassian and *there*, dwells in the athletic frame of a tawny Indian. But the soul—in all the essential elements of a soul—is the same, and for man to argue the lawful enslaving of his brother, because of an abject outward condition, is to subject the soul to the body, and to reason as if the soul were made for the body, and not the perishable body for the immortal soul.

We assert this doctrine to be false, because it puts into jeopardy the liberties of every man. Races change, losing their eminence and power in decay and corruption. No insignificant portion of history is made up of the record of national obsequies. The Egyptian once stood before the world first in the arts, foremost in the sciences. To be "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" was the undisputed title to intellectual supremacy. He wanders to-day along the banks of his sacred Nile, in all the degradation of ignorance and vice. The modern Italian is at this hour the most abject of vassals on the soil, where once he stood lord and master, and whence his edicts issued, to which Parthian and Briton paid scrupulous obedience. *In the nature of things*, there is no barrier to impede the declension of Saxons, even to share such a shameful

destiny, such a heritage of woe. *In the nature of things*, there is no insuperable obstacle to prevent the fulfilment of the unwelcome imagining of a celebrated English essayist, and "some traveller from New Zealand may—in the midst of a vast solitude—take his stand on a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's." Now if superiority of race gives the right, as well as the power to enthral, then the descendants of Hampden and Washington may be called to grind in the prison-house of despotism, or bend in fetters to the oar of some galley, or till the soil which shall yield to *them* no increase, and the mournful destiny should be borne without a solitary murmur. If to make slavery lawful, is only to make a race degraded, then your freedom is not an attribute of your nature, but an accident of your condition.

We assert this doctrine to be false, because its mere proclamation contradicts every prompting of a humane spirit; because it is demoralizing in every tendency; because it introduces dreadful confusion into our ideas of the rectitude of the Divine government, and wages war with the holiest principles of our religion; because it gives the rein to unlawful ambition and the spur to human passion; because nothing can live before it, which tends to the elevation of the masses, and which looks beneath the incrustations of outward condition to the native rights and inborn dignities of the soul. The moral argument against it only gathers strength with the advancement of christian civilization. What, then,

we are now prepared to inquire, are the generic causes of the slow growth of free principles? Why does humanity at large, in an age of benevolence, which is so intelligent, and of intelligence, which is so benevolent, come so tardily to embrace the doctrine of human freedom?

I. *In the first place, human slavery has the advantage of long establishment.* It is called by its apologists an "institution." They strive to hide from view its irregular, abnormal, unnatural features, under the cloak of this "sounding and glittering generality." They put it thus into the same category with the family and the school and the church and the state, for these all are institutions, which men everywhere recognize and maintain, even at the cost of blood. Human slavery is no feature of modern society only. It is old as the pyramids—yes, was old when the corner-stone of those mighty fabrics was laid in the sands of the desert. It has had time to strike its roots deeply into the earth. War has been its grand fertilizer, and has given to it a prolific growth. Its branches have been intertwined with the frame-work of society, so closely and so tenaciously, that to cut away the one, is said to involve the downfall of the other. It has begirt itself round about with the majesty of law. Grave senates have framed codes for it. Governments have sheltered it; and even that church, founded for the poor and the oppressed, has been timid to rebuke, or, worse than all, has entered

the lists as its champion. Antiquity has furnished the materials for its defence. Each succeeding age has contributed a more ingenious sophistry, has summoned an ampler learning, with which to uphold its gravitations toward decadence. All that human ingenuity in alliance with strong and passionate self-interest could do, to frame in its behalf an elaborate apology, and to smooth down or away all its deformities into a fair and attractive fabric, for this the centuries of its duration have granted the most ample opportunity.

This, its age, is the hiding of its power. If the systems were of yesterday, if it had sprung into being when geography first painted on her maps the western world, if ages did not look mournfully down upon its frightful history, then it were comparatively weak. It receives a toleration from many, simply because it was in being when they came upon the stage, the heritage of a former generation. They do not care to meddle with that, which their fathers were content to let alone. To others, its duration seems to confer upon it prescriptive rights, which, if an unwritten code, are, like the common law, all the more invincible. Man, by instinct, bows to what is durable and permanent. He reverences what is ancient, and if to this be added the fact of organic form, of recognized rights, he is slow to attack, hesitates, demurs, and not seldom refuses utterly, to lift up his hand against a system, which is the growth of ages. One of the commonest facts in human experience is, that familiarity with suffering

tends to dull and deaden the sensibilities. Habitual contact leads our poor human nature often to contemplate with indifference or with feeble censures that, which aforetime awoke the strongest disgust and most decided reprehension. In the case of not a few, it has been thus with human enslavement. By frequent repetition, they have forgotten the awful significance of meaning in that one, small word, *slave*. The history of human enslavement, running backwards to a remote origin, has bred a familiarity with its wrongs, and this familiarity has in turn bred an indifference to these wrongs, which never would have existed, had the slave-mart, and the slave-ship, been the foul deformities of this age only.

The voice of history is the voice of an impartial and mighty witness, to the truth of these statements. Look at the massive Feudal System, which once stretched over Europe the iron links of vassalage, and which indeed is but one of the Protean shapes human slavery has worn. The traces of its woful history remain to this day. They are to be seen in the feudal castles rising out of some dark German forest, or frowning along the vine-clad Rhine, majestic though in ruin. They are to be witnessed in the titles of nobility, still keeping up its faded state and falling fortunes in the baronial halls and under the shadow of turrets, where decay has not yet bred dissolution. This system, springing out of the dark northern barbarism, grew mightier and mightier, till it culminated in a strength

fitly symbolized by the massiveness of its castles, and by the solidity of their ramparts. It was hated by the people. They chafed under it. Wise men saw in it the mighty obstacle to human progress. Good men remonstrated, but in that day, as in later times, there were beneficial effects attending the system, which could be quoted to break the force of appeal, and dull the edge of argument. And so the feudal baron, haughty, stolid and oppressive, sat secure within his fortress, tarried long at his wassail, gazed upon the vassals who kept ward upon his battlements, or fought his petty battles, or dug in his vineyard—the abject hewers of his wood and drawers of his water—and smiled at all the vain resistance to his power. It took centuries to destroy what centuries had slowly builded. Growing by slow accretions, as islands form in the mouths of vast rivers, it was not swept away by a single wave. The entrenchments formed and cemented by age, were not carried, till after years of impetuous onset and vigorous assault. The sun has not yet gone down upon extinct feudalism. It lives to-day in the proud aristocracies of the old world. The serfdom of Russia is the same in form and in spirit with the vassalage of an earlier period. Not until a titled nobility shall have given up its factitious rights, or some violent civil convulsion have swept them from its clenched grasp, can the feudal system be regarded as utterly extirpated. Surely its history teaches us, that a hoary system falls only by ages of resistance.

II. *In the second place, the cause of human freedom has experienced a slow growth, because the office of a reformer is one attended with peculiar difficulties and odium.* To assail what has been tolerated for so many generations, is sure to call down upon his head, not only aspersion, but also malediction. He has to contend with stubborn and formidable prejudices; stubborn, because they are unreasoning, and formidable, because they are saturated with passion. It matters little how moderate may be the reformatory measures he proposes. They are not too moderate to escape denunciation. It matters little how pure and simple his motives may have been in proposing them. They are not too exalted to elude impeachment. *Presumptions*, it is affirmed, are always in favor of what has been long established, and hence the reformer, in insisting upon a new order, must have the reasons and the motives for the change drawn up in a phalanx, too solid to be broken through or overborne, by the stout resistance of the old.

Hence we find that, of those whom the world calls heroes, reformers are by no means a large class. It is only here and there on the page of history, that their deeds of moral daring, their saddening defeats or their auspicious triumphs, are recorded. We do not forget how the soul of Gracchus was stirred within him, as he journeyed through Italy to Rome, and saw her fair domain watered by the sweat dripping from the brow of slavery hard and stern and cruel; nor how his voice

was raised in the streets of the city against the system, which then, as now, was fraught with all evil; nor how his protests against the wide-spread and firmly-rooted iniquity were sealed with his blood. The world will never willingly let die the memory of Great Luther and his associates, hurling at an oppressive hierarchy, which had wrested from man his dearest and best rights, those stout rebukes, those sturdy and indignant remonstrances, which made the Papacy rock and totter on its throne in the Vatican. We remember, and the world will to latest times remember, how Wilberforce and Clarkson encountered the hisses of scorn and the revilings of obloquy; how they toiled on from year to year with steady courage, galled by disappointment, and disheartened by the prevalent and perverse apathy.

But, after all, we are confronted by the significant fact, that not many of the race have had the hearts of oak, and wills of iron, to undertake and maintain the office of a reformer. Hence it has been that human slavery has entrenched itself behind hoary usages and stiff precedents, has enlisted in its support all the diverse forms of human selfishness, of which the name is legion, and which are leagued together to ensure their own perpetuity; and all these are powers before which the eye will quail, unless fired with lion-like courage; before which the arm will droop, unless it be nerved with the inextinguishable energy of deep moral conviction.

Here then must be sought, for here only can be found, the cause that human slavery has called forth no more reformers. It is not that abuses were wanting; that inquisition for blood was not demanded; that the injustice was not rank enough and wide enough, that the oppressor has seldom trembled before the words and deeds of a Gracchus, or gnashed his teeth in rage at the philanthropic zeal of a Wilberforce and a Clarkson. But because in attacking the system of human enslavement, the ungenerous impugning of motives, sharper than steel; the mean calumnies more painful than the stabs of an assassin; the stern self-denials more wearing than the most anxious cares of business; because all this is to be faced and felt, it is not strange, as men count strangeness, no, it is not strange, that most men have been content to take their ease, to eat, drink and be merry, and leave such moral drudgery to others, they know not and perhaps care not, who. And therefore, it is not strange that the cause of human freedom has had only a slow growth through all the long and weary ages, during which slavery has been forging its fetters and fastening its manacles.

III. *In the third place, because slavery rallies to its support some of the strongest principles of a corrupt human nature, this sacred cause has experienced a slow growth.*

It is obvious, too obvious to need any detailed exposition of the fact, that the *love of mere power* is a mas-

sive abutment of the system of slavery, if not its corner-stone. It is equally obvious, that no other human passion grows more rapidly, none other is quelled with more difficulty. It is reckless of all consequences, when opposed by obstacles. It may become a mania, if the sun in his circuit looks down anywhere upon such a phenomenon. Ambition seeks for itself long and splendid retinues, as well as renown in letters. There is a pride in commanding serfs and vassals and slaves—no matter how abject these may be—as well as in commanding armies, less noble indeed but not less real or less active. He is but a dull scholar in the lessons of history, to whom all this is not familiar as his alphabet.

Leagued with this lust for command, against the cause of freedom, is the lust of gain. This is a meaner but no less virulent passion. The vitality of both springs from the same prolific source—selfishness. They are different forms of destructiveness, pervaded by the same malignant spirit. The two passions sway this lower world, and nowhere does their sovereignty develop its hideous features more than on the fields tilled, or the mines dug by slavery.

It is, we very well know, a wretched fallacy which hugs slavery as a gainful institution. It is a demonstration palpable to the intellect and to the senses also, that on the broad scale the community is impoverished, even to bankruptcy, by its blight. But it removes from the master that drudgery of existence, so

useful, so bracing as a discipline, and which therefore no man has a right to cast off, and appeals to the sluggishness of the indolent soul. It gives smooth hands and a soft cheek, for the hard palm and embrowned visage of labor, but the fair flesh is too often purchased at the price of a hard heart. It generates false ideas of labor, flings wanton indignities upon honest toil, forgets that the Divine Man toiled with faithful industry in the shop of Joseph, and thus causes the slave-holder to cling with the very grasp of death to the system, which relieves him from the necessity of toil; which clothes him in purple and fine linen, while rags cover the nakedness of the toiling slave; which feeds him with sumptuous fare, while despised labor in huts and hovels eats the coarse husks doled out by the heartless overseer.

It is with passions of power like to these, and of prevalence like to these, that the principles of freedom are called to grapple. It is evident on the simplest scrutiny that the conflict must be long, severe, and waged at fearful odds. There is no just cause for wonder, if victory be not achieved before the going down of the sun; if, before the hour of final triumph, there be many and bitter defeats. The earth cursed by sin is an arena, where passion has every advantage in contending with the noble and the holy, and though we do wrong to misdoubt the inherent strength of the right, yet it is but the dictate of sound judgment to reckon only upon distant success. To exorcise the demon of human

selfishness, ah! not the charms of incantation, not the enchantments of weird magicians, not the spells of cunning necromancers, can cast out this devil. It goeth not out but by prayer and fasting; by long, patient, self-denying toil; by heroic suffering, cheerfully endured; by the baptism of blood spilled in senate-chambers; by the ordeal of imprisonments; by all that moral courage can brave and moral daring can vanquish, so, and not otherwise shall the demoniac, slavery, be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. But he who would see this, must wait and watch through years.

If, however, the growth of free principles be necessarily slow, yet there are stable reasons for anticipating their final triumph; which was the *second proposition* to be maintained in this discourse.

I. *In the first place, the instincts of humanity are against slavery and in favor of freedom.*

These are choked by barbarism. Not until man has emerged from the savage state, do they become a power in the life, softening down its harsh and rugged features, and budding forth in humane and humanizing acts. Even then, they are oft-times crushed by self-interest. Avarice muzzles them, until they become dumb. Party spirit over-rides them, and swallows up, as in a sepulchre vast and dreary, their once graceful forms and kindly natures. For these reasons, the verdict of our humane instincts has not been oftener heard,

pronouncing stern condemnation upon slavery, and stirring the active powers to labors for its extinction. It is true that poetry has embalmed them in her inspirations. The fervid lines of Cowper swayed the minds of men as truly as did the arguments of Wilberforce, or the appeals of Clarkson. Romance too has given them an utterance, effective where statistics were impotent, and welcomed where syllogisms were a burden. This heralds the coming of a day, when the instincts of humanity, unclogged by the hardening, deadening influences of barbarism, spurning the meanness of self-interest, scorning with utter loathing the vile craft of party spirit, strengthened and developed by the spirit of advancing civilization, refined and sanctified by the growth of christianity within the soul, shall make a final and successful protest against the horrors of the slave-mart, and the cruel degradations of the plantation. It is the high office of these humane instincts, which burn ever, like vestal flames, upon the altar of a true and noble soul, to rouse the dormant energies of men, against the mighty system whose dark and fearful history spans ages. They will kindle from their own altar the fire of enthusiasm, which no obstacles can quench, and no discouragements subdue. They will inspire a courage, which will rise superior to all temporizing, to all timid policies; which will ever dare the right, and never blench before the wrong. And if any man distrust the power of humane instincts, let him hear those scarred veterans from the hospital at Scutari

tell, with moistened eyes and quivering lips, how Florence Nightingale counted not her life dear unto her, and, abandoning all the comforts of home and solaces of friends, flew to their relief, binding up their wounds, pouring in oil and wine. Or let him ask yon fireman, who, with face begrimmed with smoke and with flesh blistered by flame, has just put into the arms of its mother the sweet babe, smiling in unconscious infancy. Rouse but once such a power as this against slavery, give free course to all its latent energy, and were that accursed system ten times mightier than it is, it could not long stand—the hoary abomination of unutterable desolation.

II. *In the second place, the intellectual growth of man tends to undermine the system of slavery.*

This necessarily involves an expansion of the soul, which is hostile to the spirit of despotism, wherever found, and of whatever kind, and which, unless stubbornly resisted, tends to its subversion. It is true, that in ancient times slavery co-existed with the highest forms of art, and with the ripest classic culture. But learning was then the boon of the few, and ignorance the bane of the many. Knowledge was not prevalent enough among the masses, to exert fully its liberalizing spirit upon the foundations of their social structure. Hence Athens was no stranger to the exactions of the task-master, and Rome heard, with scarce a shudder, the lash of the overseer.

It is also true, that in sections where slavery still prevails, there are champions of the system of no mean ability, of various learning, of fine culture. In fact, it is put forward as a plea for the system, that it gives to gentlemen leisure for literary and scientific pursuits, and thus is fitted to extend the ever-widening domain of human knowledge. But a comparison of society without slavery with society where slavery exists, reveals the fact, that the triumphs of the human mind in the former are more, and more brilliant than in the latter. From this the inference is plain and irrefragable, that slavery is hostile to the largest and broadest development of the human soul. If, then, this development be secured, the system of human enslavement must fall by an inevitable law.

It is a significant fact of American history that, during the Revolution, our universities bred no tories. Their influence was all thrown for the independence of the colonies. So shall it be in coming time. Intelligence by its own nature, of its own heaven-born right, is the ally of freedom. The spirit of letters is a humanizing spirit. Philosophy sets too high a value upon the human soul to give her sanction to any form of human enslavement. Science is too much the child of nature to tolerate the unnatural system of human bondage. The muse of poetry chants no strains in eulogy of oppression. History demonstrates the financial cheat of slavery. Is it therefore any day-dream to regard the growth of intelligence in all classes, as the

precursor of an emancipation, which, if in the remote future, is yet universal? Hath it aught of visionary enthusiasm to hail the common school, sneered at where human servitude prevails, as one great instrumentality of human liberty? Is it mere declamation, with no basis of sound logic, with no substance of well-considered argument, to claim that when the present shall have discharged the debt they owe to future generations, in a larger and richer culture of the mind, there will not also be found a sterner hatred of oppression, and a stronger love of freedom for all? If not, then every pæan of intellectual triumph is another note in the knell of slavery. If not, then also is every honest effort to advance human knowledge, to widen the sphere of human attainment, a contribution to the cause of human freedom. And as it is our cherished belief, on grounds which cannot be overthrown, that the race is destined to unlimited progress in knowledge, so does it follow that the rising of intelligence must ultimately prove the downfall of human servitude.

III. *In the third place, religion, both natural and revealed, is hostile to slavery.*

On political grounds it is perhaps possible to make out some show of argument for the slave system. But the moment the issue is shifted to moral grounds, the advocate or apologist for slavery is performing the labor of Sisyphus, rolling upwards a huge, unwieldy mass, which rebounds from the summit, and plunges downward to the starting-place.

So far as man can gain moral teaching from nature, it is all against the system. In nature, all living things are free. The bird of heaven wings his flight to any grove, and sings on any bough, chooses his own mate, and rears the chirping brood, from which no stronger of his kind may tear him. The fish of the sea cleaves its liquid pathway through the deep, and sports near any sedgy brim, as pleases it. The beast of the field wanders or rests, and is not careful to ask his mates of the lowing herd, whither or when he may go. Each is independent in his own province, and, by the argument from the lower to the higher, it is right that man, in his province, should be independent also. Natural law is armed against the system, and, by awful retribution, teaches its iniquity. The religion of nature is founded, as all religion must be, upon love, for God is love; and hence natural religion is opposed throughout to slavery, which is the bitter essence of hard and griping selfishness. The duty of loving the neighbor as one's self, is not brought to light by christianity; it was a duty before christianity was a system of religion. But as written on the heart of man, and on every page of the book of nature, this duty cries aloud against the institution, which exists and battens on its violation.

Turning to revealed religion, we find this protest against human enslavement, uttered with a more weighty emphasis, and confirmed by the voice of sacred history and divine example. The very fact that God has given to man a revelation of his will, presupposes the fact

that every man may read that revelation according to the dictate of his own conscience, and at the prompting of his own will. Slavery not only ignores but denies this fact. The theory is—whatever be the practice—that the will of the master is the will of the slave. If the master be a Moslem, he may compel his slave to pray at the call of the muezzin; if he be a pagan, he may compel his servant to offer sacrifice to an idol; if he be a Romanist, he may compel his bondsman to chatter his Ave Marias at matins and vespers.

It is more than a miserable sham, it is downright injustice to the christian scheme, to quote what was temporary and peculiar in the Pentateuch, as divine legislation for the nineteenth century. Unjust, because patriarchal times are averred by inspiration to be times of ignorance, which God winked at, and more flagrantly unjust, because the spirit of the Mosaic code is a humane spirit, and would have falsified itself over and over again, had it justified such a slave code as darkens our national annals. The *genius* of christianity is the genius of liberty. The gospel of Christ has, as one of its fundamental articles, the idea that every human soul is free, owning the will of God as supreme, between which and his own no other will may interpose; that no arbitrary obstructions to its reception and perfect practice, should be thrust upon man by any system. That man who can stand in the presence of the truths uttered by Christ and his apostles, with a justification or apology for human enslavement, is beyond the reach of

argument. *His* are difficulties which logic cannot reach. As soon reason with the iceberg, which is dashing on toward your trembling bark. As soon expostulate with the bear robbed of her whelps. There are but three categories, under which such pleas can be classed, hollow-hearted hypocrisy, or intellectual stupidity, or blinding prejudices.

More than all, we know that the Bible is committed against all slavery, slavery of the soul and slavery of the body; slavery of the tongue and slavery of the pen; slavery of the mine and slavery of the plantation. When, in the midst of inspired predictions concerning the kingdom of Christ, we find the positive, distinct, and exalted declaration, recorded side by side with assurances of the perpetuity, and ultimate prevalence of that kingdom, the most unequivocal and solemn, that *the oppressor shall be broken in pieces*, we must conclude that it is the death-warrant of slavery. That is but a capricious interpretation, which would refer it only to the downfall of spiritual hierarchies, with their infernal mechanisms for torturing men into acceptance of a loathsome creed. When, in the closing passages of the first testament—a book which, from first to last, is hostile to the exactions and degradations and cruelties of slavery—we hear the voice of Jehovah saying, "*I will be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages*," we cannot but feel that Revelation is armed to the teeth against a system, which *does* oppress the hireling in his wages, if testimony can establish

any fact of history. When we read that Christ came to *fulfil*, and not to destroy, these inspired declarations; when we hear him inculcate a spirit of love between man and man, and for man as man; when we find the position of the Old Testament, in its last book, taken up, endorsed, and intensified in the language of an Epistle, language which attacks the exactions of slavery, if any meaning can be put into words, *Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth*, there is no resisting the conviction that the gospel of Christ is anointed of God, as Christ declared in the synagogue at Nazareth, in the very outset of his ministry, *to preach deliverance to the captives and to set at liberty them that are bruised.* Therefore we conclude that religion, which is the strongest force in human life, being arrayed in deadly opposition to human servitude, the system, however ancient, must ultimately fall. In fact, as we have seen, all the powers of man's being are arrayed against this iniquity. His humane instincts, his intellectual expansion, his moral convictions, all unite to form a serried rank of opposition, which nothing earthly is strong enough to withstand. And if the lessons of history are in aught reliable, if it is at all legitimate to argue from the past to the future, if it is just to reckon upon the unconditional fulfilments of a divine purpose, then, as the truth liveth, and as the Lord of the truth liveth like-

wise, slavery shall meet a final doom, and fair Freedom, whose growth has been from the feeble blade to the swelling ear, and upward to the full corn in the ear, shall cover the earth with its rich and graceful harvest.

Since last we gathered in this house, on this our annual thanksgiving, a mighty but bloodless contest of freedom with slavery has been fought. It was a conflict of opinion; but, in its principles and in its destinies, girt round about with true moral sublimity. How stern was the struggle for the interests of human liberty, it is not needful to recount. It was not given the friends of liberty to sing the pæans of triumph. More than one stout heart drooped for the moment, grew sad and sick, as the thought of fresh fetters and larger arena for the victims of slavery, seemed to rise before the eye peering into the future. But as it was the high privilege of many a christian pulpit, to infuse christian principle and christian energy into the contest, (I would to God all had used their birthright,) so now it is the privilege of the true-hearted preacher, to gather up cheering auguries from amid the dishearteningings of defeat. Well indeed may the sons of New England celebrate this day with thanksgiving; for, to their annals, already proud, has been added another chapter, on which future ages shall dwell, as we now dwell on the deeds of Hampden or the story of Bunker Hill. New England was true to her history, and true to that goodly, that noble ancestry, whose lives were

the embodiment of free principles. New England spoke—as when did she ever fail to speak, when human liberty was in jeopardy—for freedom. That staunch and dauntless spirit of Puritanism, which braved the wintry storms and inhospitable coasts, which, for liberty's sake, drew the sword against the land where reposed the ashes of their fathers, lived yet among these granite hills, on this hardy soil, and under these bending skies. Its protest against oppression has gone forth to all lands. It has been wafted to the Vatican and thunders there. It peals over the steppes of Russia, where serfs drag their heavy chains. It reverberates in Austrian dungeons. Wherever the oppressed sigh; wherever the enslaved groan; wherever tyranny holds its harsh empire; wherever the crushed people mourn in their bondage, there will be heard the voice of New England telling that there is yet a Spartan band, who will guard the sacred cause of human freedom, in the dark and trying hours of its history; that the down-trodden have yet an asylum where they are secure, and that the past has given sacred pledges to the future. Well, then, may ye enter into the courts of the Lord with thanksgiving, and his gates with praise, for such a history—true to liberty, as needle to the blue star shining steadily in its northern home. And it is yours, together with every lover of his race, to chant the strains of triumph even in apparent defeat:

"For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though battled oft is ever won."